UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council renews UNDOF mandate until 31 May 1996; calls on Israel and Syria to immediately implement resolution 338 (1973) with view to just and lasting peace in Middle East.

* Security Council welcomes reaffirmation by Angolan Government and UNITA of their commitment to peace process; stresses need for full implementation of Lusaka Protocol.

* Secretary-General discusses situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone with President of Ghana; expresses gratitude for Ghanaian support of United Nations.

* Security Council calls for immediate end to fighting in Sierra Leone; urges Revolutionary United Front to take advantage of Secretary-General's offer of good offices.

* Secretary-General expresses grave concern at recent fighting around Kabul; appeals to parties to exercise maximum restraint and to cooperate with United Nations Special Mission.

* Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs says Chernobyl aid projects must have adequate funding, citing long-term consequences of disaster.

* President of World Commission on Culture and Development introduces report entitled "Our Creative Diversity" at Headquarters.

* General Committee recommends General Assembly include item on World Tourism Organization pensions and sub-item on International Court of Justice vacancy in current agenda.

* States Parties to Law of Sea Convention discuss final draft protocol on privileges and immunities of International Tribunal.

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The Security Council today renewed the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for six months, until 31 May 1996. The Force was established in 1974 to supervise the cease-fire called for by the May

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1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces.

By unanimously adopting resolution 1024 (1995), the Council called on the parties to implement immediately resolution 338 (1973). By that resolution, the Council called on the parties to apply the principles it had earlier defined for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in 1967, termination of all claims and states of belligerency, and acknowledgement of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every State in the area.

The Council requested the Secretary-General to submit, by 31 May, a report on the development in the situation and the measures taken to implement resolution 338 (1973).

Following the adoption of today's resolution, President Salim bin Mohammed Al-Khussaiby (Oman) made the following complementary statement on behalf of the Council:

"As is known, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/1995/952) states, in paragraph 14: 'Despite the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, the situation in the Middle East continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached'. That statement of the Secretary-General reflects the view of the Security Council."

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The Security Council today welcomed the joint communique issued by the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) on 13 November, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to the peace process. In a statement by its President, the Council noted that some of the steps necessary to implement the Lusaka Protocol had been taken recently, including the resumption of military talks in Luanda and the movement of the first UNITA combatants to quartering areas.

Despite those positive steps, the Council noted continued cease-fire violations, importation of weapons, restrictions on freedom of movement and the presence of mercenaries. It stressed that much remained to be done urgently to implement the Lusaka Protocol, including strict observance of the cease-fire, the continuation of the quartering process, the quartering of the Rapid Reaction Police, the return of the Angolan Armed Forces to defensive positions and the resolution of questions regarding the modalities of military integration.

The Council called on the Government of Angola and UNITA to continue to cooperate with the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) and to respect fully the status and security of international personnel.

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On the third day of his official visit to Ghana, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with President Jerry John Rawlings. He expressed his gratitude to the President for participating in the recent special commemorative session of the General Assembly and for the continuous support given by Ghana to the United Nations, including its peace-keeping operations.

The Secretary-General and the President discussed the situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Mr. Boutros-Ghali thanked Mr. Rawlings for having co-hosted the recent Pledging Conference on Liberia, which had secured commitments of $145 million. Regarding Sierra Leone, they expressed disappointment at the fact that the Revolutionary United Front leadership was not forthcoming in establishing a dialogue with the Government which would facilitate a political solution to the country's problems. They agreed that that attitude could be an obstacle to the ongoing process of democratization, and called on the RUF to initiate a process of negotiation.

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The Security Council yesterday called for an immediate end to the fighting in Sierra Leone. In a statement by President Salim bin Mohammed Al-Khussaiby, it urged the Revolutionary United Front, whose attempt to overthrow the Government in 1991 began the conflict, to take advantage of the Secretary-General's offer of good offices to facilitate negotiations.

The Council expressed concern at the suffering resulting from the conflict, particularly that of the nearly 2 million internally displaced people -- nearly half the population of Sierra Leone. It underlined the need for generous humanitarian assistance and stressed the importance of a coordinated international humanitarian effort. It deplored attacks on humanitarian convoys and demanded that those responsible cease such actions immediately.

The Council welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative in preparing, in collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone, an action plan for the demobilization and reintegration of combatants. It also welcomed the programme of transition to democratic constitutional rule and supported the work of the Interim National Electoral Commission in preparing for the elections to be held next February. It called on Member States to provide the fullest possible material and financial support to the Commission.

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The Secretary-General today expressed grave concern at the recent escalation of fighting around Kabul, in particular the bombing of the Afghan capital on 26 November, which resulted in many deaths and injuries among civilians. He appealed to all parties to exercise maximum restraint. He also called on them to cooperate with the United Nations Special Mission, headed by

Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri, aimed at achieving an immediate cease-fire and promoting negotiations on a transitional mechanism for the transfer of power, to achieve a just and durable settlement acceptable to all Afghans.

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Aid projects to deal with the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster are being terminated for want of funding, support and interest, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Peter Hansen, told correspondents at Headquarters today. He expressed the hope that tomorrow's Meeting of the Expanded Quadripartite Committee for Coordination on Chernobyl would reverse that trend.

Mr. Hansen pointed out that the Chernobyl accident was the world's worst environmental disaster. It had affected nine million people -- and displaced at least 375,000 of them -- in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. It had resulted in very high morbidity rates and a 285-fold increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer, particularly among children. Most disasters had a discernible beginning and end, he said, but the consequences of Chernobyl might not be apparent for 20 years.

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The President of the World Commission on Culture and Development, Javier Perez de Cuellar, yesterday introduced the Commission's report, "Our Creative Diversity", at Headquarters. The former United Nations Secretary-General told correspondents that the international community had been frustrated at the failure of economic development to solve social problems. The economic approach was probably not the best way to solve development problems -- cultural issues had also to be addressed.

The Commission's report tried to put the human being at the centre of development, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said. Culture was not just music and art -- it also referred to human problems. The report dealt with developing and developed countries. Both the United States and Sierra Leone, for example, had social and economic problems that needed to be resolved. The international community had not paid enough attention to solving human problems.

The report focused on the cultural dimension of development, he continued. To gain a broader view of the issue, the Commission had held meetings with personalities and scholars in North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa. The main task now was follow-up to the report's recommendations. A proper follow-up mechanism was being discussed with the Director-General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Secretary-General.

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The General Committee today recommended that the General Assembly include in its current agenda an item on the admission of the World Tourism Organization to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, and a sub-item on elections to fill a vacancy on the International Court of Justice.

The Committee further recommended that the item on the admission of the World Tourism Organization to the Pension Fund be allocated to the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary). The sub-item on the vacancy in the World Court would be taken up directly by the plenary under the item on elections to fill vacancies in principal organs. The Committee's recommendations will be considered by the Assembly on Friday.

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The Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea began yesterday with a discussion on the final draft protocol on the privileges and immunities of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The draft was developed in the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and for the Tribunal.

The States Parties Meeting, which will end on 1 December, is concentrating on practical arrangements for the Tribunal. The Tribunal is the central mechanism of the compulsory dispute-settlement set up by the Convention, and will be based in Hamburg, Germany.

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